

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS  
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Deuel School District  
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2001-2002**

**Team Members:** Chris Sargent and Vicki Bantam, Education Specialists

**Dates of On Site Visit:** November 7 and 8, 2002

**Date of Report:** November 11, 2002

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This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Office of Special Education. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

<b>Promising Practice</b>	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
<b>Meets Requirements</b>	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
<b>Needs Improvement</b>	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
<b>Out of Compliance</b>	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
<b>Not applicable</b>	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

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<b>Principle 1 – General Supervision</b>
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

**Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Surveys
- File reviews
- Enrollment tables
- Monitoring
- Newspapers

- In-service training
- Personal information
- Comprehensive plan Budgeted district services
- State child find forms
- Screening procedures
- Placement alternatives
- Exiting information
- Placement data by age
- School records
- IEP documents
- Parental rights
- Graduation
- State printout on assessment
- Suspension and expulsion data documented by the Principals
- NCA reports
- District policy
- Services available to students on IEPs
- District in-service plan

### **Promising practice**

The steering committee concluded areas of promising practice to be that more students with special needs graduate than non-disabled students; no students with special needs have been suspended or expelled and that knowledgeable staff implement and document pre-referral strategies.

### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee concluded that parents receive their due process rights, all referrals are documented and addressed according to district policy and that services, including those offered to home school students, are provided by certified, well trained and competent staff. The district is meeting all requirements that are mandated by the state regarding nonpublic school placements, IDEA, and other state standards. Performance testing is implemented in accordance to guidelines and students are progressing according to their goals and outcomes.

### **Needs improvement**

The steering committee concluded the district needs to involve general education staff in understanding the special education process and helping to design programs and services to students with special needs. The school also needs to implement parent training, staff and student advisory groups for special education programs. More time is needed in the areas of planning and modifying curriculum and paraprofessionals need more training in working with students with special needs.

## **Validation Results**

### **Promising practice**

The district conducts Teacher Assistance Teams meetings consistently at all levels. Individual student's needs are addressed and strategies implemented prior to a special education referral. Staff was very knowledgeable and supportive of the process to address student issues. The TAT may include a previous teacher or teacher who has had instructional success with the identified student. The team looks at what has been tried in the classroom, discusses alternative strategies, classes in which the student has experienced success and accommodations that have been tried and failed. All referrals for special education come through the TAT process.

**Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as maintenance for general supervision as concluded by the steering committee.

**Needs improvement**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as maintenance for general supervision as concluded by the steering committee.

<b>Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education</b>
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All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

**Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Child find
- Parental rights document
- Student and parent surveys
- Doctor and teacher referrals
- Day care
- Various workgroups
- File reviews
- State documentation
- Birth to 3 interagency documentation
- Suspension and expulsion data
- School records
- Deuel school handbook
- Training information

**Promising practice**

The steering committee concluded no suspensions or expulsions to be an area of promising practice.

**Meets requirements**

The steering committee concluded the district follows FAPE guidelines, meets the needs of children through annual reviews, services provided and child count. The district has policies and procedures for the suspension/expulsion of students and follows the reporting requirements of the state. District staff has the skills to develop behavioral intervention plans and follow correct procedural guidelines.

**Needs improvement**

The steering committee concluded the district needs more parent input about the special education program and workshops to ensure FAPE.

## **Validation Results**

### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as maintenance for free appropriate public education as concluded by the steering committee.

### **Needs improvement**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as maintenance for free appropriate public education as concluded by the steering committee.

## **Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation**

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

## **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- File reviews
- Comprehensive plan
- Excent software templates
- Parent and staff surveys
- Training information
- District budget

### **Promising practice**

The steering committee concluded the involvement of the Human Service Agency with children at risk, professional development activities, and the lack of due process hearing were areas of promising practice for the district.

### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee concluded that the following activities meet the requirements of appropriate evaluation: staff development practices, provision of evaluation to parents, multidisciplinary/multifaceted evaluation, parent input into the evaluation process and parent rights, evaluation instruments and eligibility and placement determination meet the requirements of appropriate evaluation.

## **Validation Results**

### **Promising practice**

The district has adopted an early dismissal policy every Wednesday. This time is scheduled to keep staff current on district issues, provided staff in-service, provide staff with conference information attended by others, update staff regarding board decisions and actions and respond to specific needs such as No Child Left Behind or continuous improvement monitoring process activities.

The district and Human Service Agency staff collaborate to assist students at risk and families. The district works with the agency and involves them in IEP meetings. The agency supports district efforts

through family counseling services in the home and family encouragement and involvement in the child's educational program.

#### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as maintenance for appropriate evaluation as concluded by the steering committee.

#### **Needs improvement**

District procedures for obtaining parent input into the evaluation process included the use of a parent input form which is sent to parents with the prior notice for every initial and reevaluation. If the parent did not sign and return the form the monitoring team was unable to validate the districts effort to obtain parental input. Occasionally a comment was included on other documents; however the district process does not yield consistent results and needs improvement.

### **Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards**

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

#### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Parental rights document
- Student IEPs
- Teacher surveys
- Student file reviews
- Student/parent surveys
- Administrative surveys
- Parental consent/release form
- Prior notice form
- Access logs

#### **Promising practice**

The steering committee concluded areas of promising practice are: staff training regarding procedural safeguards and written notice, prior notice procedures, IEE procedures, student transfer of rights.

#### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee concluded areas of maintenance are written notice for refusal of meetings, procedural safeguard/parental rights policies, responding to parents in their native language and policies regarding complaints and due process hearing. The district acquires consent for initial evaluation, reevaluation and transferring records. Procedures provide parents access to student records. Parents receive copies of IEPs and information regarding transfer of rights. District staff is trained and understand their responsibilities for confidentiality and access to records.

## **Validation Results**

### **Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as maintenance for procedural safeguards as concluded by the steering committee.

### **Out of compliance**

24:05:30:04. Prior notice and parent consent. Written notice which meets the requirements of § 24:05:30:05 must be given to the parents five days before the district proposes or refuses to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child or the provision of a free appropriate public education to the child.

Consent was not obtained for evaluations administered to students in 4 files reviewed. For example, an adaptive behavior evaluation was administered but was not included on the prior notice/consent signed by the parent. A transition evaluation was administered and was not included on the prior notice/consent sent to parents.

## **Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program**

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Parent rights
- District handbook
- Staff training and in-service
- File reviews
- Parent and student surveys
- Teacher surveys
- Progress reports
- Student IEPs

### **Promising practice**

The steering committee concluded the development and implementation of a needs assessment survey an area of promising practice.

### **Meets requirements**

The steering committee concluded the district has policies and procedures in place to support IEP requirements, process and team members.

### **Needs improvement**

The steering committee concluded the district is not providing adequate coverage for staff to attend IEP meetings or training.

## **Validation Results**

### **Needs improvement**

Functional assessments were administered as part of each student initial and reevaluation process with specific skills affected by the disability included in the evaluation report. Present levels of performance also contained specific skills affected by the disability; however they did not always coincide with the evaluation report. Through interview, the monitoring team concluded this may be occurring when the psychologist administers the functional assessment rather than district educators. The district may want to review this procedure to assure present levels of performance link to evaluation and to prevent a duplication of effort on the part of staff.

### **Out of compliance**

#### **24:05:27:01.03. Content of individualized education program.**

For each student beginning at age 14 or younger if determined appropriate by the placement committee, the IEP is to contain a statement of the transition service needs that focuses on the student's course of study such as participation in advanced-placement courses or a vocational education program. The course of study for transition age students did not indicate specific courses for electives in 5 of 6 files reviewed.

Each student's individualized education program shall include the projected date for the beginning of the services and modifications the anticipated frequency, location, and duration of those services and modifications. In 7 of 16 files reviewed, the statement, "these modifications will be used on a daily basis as needed" was documented in the students IEP.

## **Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment**

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- File reviews
- Teacher surveys
- State placement data
- Preschool data sheets
- Parent and student surveys

### **Promising practice**

The steering committee concluded inclusion is promoted by the district. Special education teachers or aides frequently attend classes of students with special needs. The speech/language therapist provides instruction on a regular basis in the classes where there are students with special education. At the beginning of the school year, general education teacher receives a copy of modification/accommodations for each student with special education they teach. The teachers keep this information confidential and receive an updated copy following the student's annual reevaluation/IEP meeting in addition to any addendum information.

**Meets requirements**

The steering committee concluded the district has policies and procedures to support an individualized continuum of LRE for K-12 students as well as children who attend Head Start/daycare facilities in the community and out-of-district placements. The most appropriate placement for each student is documented and based upon parent and regular educators' input, the student's ability and skills; how the student's disability affects their progress in the regular education classroom, modifications and accommodations, special factors, and potential harmful effects.

**Needs improvement**

The steering committee concluded high school staff needs training in the implementation of modifications and accommodations and K-12 teachers desire more training obtaining to inclusion techniques and behavioral strategies.

**Validation Results****Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as maintenance for least restrictive environment as concluded by the steering committee.

**Needs improvement**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as maintenance for least restrictive environment as concluded by the steering committee.